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THE ORPHAN'S TRIAL.

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A TALE IN BLANK VERSE



LONDON

WILLIAM PICKERING

1847



THE ORPHAN'S TRIAL.

A TALE IN BLANK VERSE.

FIRST PART.

TWAS summer—and the time was eventide.
The fond Sun wept to leave this lovely earth;
And still the mountain's brow was blushing red
With his last parting kiss. There was one spot,
A quiet spot, where long the sun-beams lingered :
For every sweet and gentle sound it breathed,
The brook's light music, and the murmuring trees,
The birds' soft warbling, and the sigh of flowers,
Whispered one word. And on each verdant field,
Each shady lane, and every sunny bank,
Each pretty cottage, and each garden sweet,
On every thing on which the eye might rest,
One word was written : Home ! Ours is the people,
Amongst the many nations of the world,
Best knows the binding spell of that dear name.
And ours the land wherein such scenes exist,
So quiet in their cheerful beauty : England !
Let not the might of the oppressor rend
From the poor man his share in that loved land.

Oh give to every Englishman his home !
It is his birthright : his best privilege :
It is his home that makes him what he is.
Deprive him of his heart's most cherished blessing,
Crush in his soul its inborn love of home,
And you have blasted England's boasted strength.
No more with firm and dauntless bravery
Her sons shall bear them in the battle field ;
No more their noblest foes give way before
Th' unyielding, fixed resolve to win or die.
It is the thought of home that nerves their heart
And gives their arm new strength. The love of home
That makes them gladly brave a thousand deaths
To save in purity its hallowed joys.
Home ! is their watchword in the battle strife :
The name that thrills on every Briton's heart.
Almost the only spell that binds alike
The lowly and the great, and makes them brethren.
This is it that endears them to their land :
The love of Home expanded, makes the Patriot.

The peaceful scene that lay in sunset beauty
Was one which every English heart must love.
The merry wind went wandering 'mongst the leaves,
Murmuring melodiously, as if it fain
Would strive to imitate the birds' sweet song.
The purple forest with its shadowy depths
Contrasted with the smooth and verdant grass,
Rich in the mellowed brilliancy of sunset.
There at her cottage door the wife is standing,
Drest all so neatly, yet so prettily,

Watching to give the labourer welcome home.
There stands the simple village church, its spire
Pointing to heaven—there the sweet rectory,
Half hid with climbing shrubs, and there the school.
There was a sound of childhood's laughter near ;
And the light springing step of joyous youth.
And happy little ones, hand joined in hand,
Were bounding o'er the grass, fresh as themselves,
Shouting with glee, singing for merriment.
But one, a little girl, whose large dark eyes,
Looked downwards with a sadness that was strange
And pitiful to see, when all around
Were bright and laughing, stood apart, alone
With her own thoughts, and they were very sad.
She was a child with none of childhood's joys ;
A girl, and no one in this world to love.
And as her gaze fixed on that happy group
She felt how different was her lot to theirs.
Well might they laugh : each had a happy home,
A tender mother and indulgent sire ;
And when one day of pleasure had gone past
They slept but to awaken to new joys.
Oft had she seen a loving mother's kiss
Imprinted on the warm cheek of her child ;
And the vain yearning for an unknown bliss
Had agonized her heart. She gazed with strange
And tearful wonder at their boisterous mirth.
To dance, and laugh, and sing ! and seem so glad !
While she could weep for grief. The sight but laid
A heavier weight upon her sinking soul.
Not many minutes past before the troop

Of happy ones felt something like a cloud
Come o'er the brightness of their hearts ; they knew
Instinctively that there was sadness near.
And now the dance was stayed ; the laughter hushed ;
And the sweet voices lately joined in song
Were speaking words of kindness to the mourner.
And Lucy stood among them, gazing round
With wistful looks from face to face : poor child,
Such accents sounded very strange to her.
“ Don't cry,” said one, and put her little arms
Round Lucy's neck, and kissed her trembling lip.
“ You're a new comer,” said another, “ else
You would not cry, we're all so happy here.
We heard that a strange gentleman was come
To live upon the hill, and you must be
His little girl : you do not know us yet,
But dry your tears, and we shall soon be friends.”
One little fairy caught her by the hand :
“ What will you play at ? There are many games ;
We'll choose which you like best.” Poor Lucy sobbed.
She knew no game. “ What, where you lived before
Were there no little boys and girls to play ?
Don't you know how to dance, and leap, and sing ?
Had you no playfellows ? ” “ Yes, there was one,
A little boy, who often watched for me
Out in the lane, and then we ran away
And played for hours together in the fields.
I loved him very much, for he loved me.
But him they buried in the cold church-yard,
Where they put all I love.” The children round
Stood motionless ; they had no heart to play,

For Lucy's tones were very very sad :
And, in their young simplicity, they felt
That grief was sacred. Till a little girl,
Gentle and fair, stole softly to her side,
And gazing on her with her meek blue eyes,
Said very sweetly, " Let me be your friend :
I have a brother too in the church-yard."
The simple reason went to Lucy's heart,
And the two children from that hour were friends.
" Have you no parents ?" asked the gentle Rose.
And Lucy hesitated, thought, then said,
" I had a mother once, I've seen her grave :
And there was one I called ' Mamma,' and loved,
Oh, very much ; but she was not my mother.
Besides, there was papa, who seldom smiled,
And always spoke as I do when I'm sad :
And he was kind, but not like dear mamma.
They are dead now, and nurse, and all I love."

Poor little one ! her tale was very strange,
And true as sad. Her mother had been young
And very beautiful, with but one fault :
She trusted where she loved ; and was deceived.
She could not suffer scorn, and her heart broke.
Deserted, spurned, she bowed her head, and died :
And left her infant to the world's cold pity.
One only, her old faithful nurse had deigned
To comfort and assist the fallen one.
She took the babe ; and to its father told
The tale of its sad birth ; its mother's death.
And then, alas, too late ! repentance came,

And bitter anguish tore the traitor's breast.
For he had loved her : but her rank was low,
And the proud Seymour would not wed the ignoble.
He smote upon his breast with agony,
It was his child ; 'twas hers ; her dying gift :
The fatal pledge of too much love for him.
He could not part with it. Yet how adopt ?
For he had given the hand he promised *her*,
To one not only beautiful, but noble.
And then again he gazed upon the babe.
It was his only child ! Frantic, he seized it,
And rushing where his gentle wife was sitting
Threw it before her. Tenderly she raised
The child, which clung with terror to her breast ;
And Seymour told her all. And as she heard,
The quivering lip and heaving breast alone,
Told of the agnony that wrung her heart.
Oh, she had loved him fondly, and believed
That he was honour's self. Her woman's hope
That she had been his first and only love
Was cruelly destroyed : and yet, if thoughts
That laid the weight of years on her young heart,
Were crowding on her now, she told them not.
And he, with every feature, every tone
Convulsed with agony, besought her pity.
“ Oh, if you cannot love me, pardon me,—
His voice was choked with sobs ; the proud man wept.
And she, the wrong'd and injured woman,—she
With every fibre of her heart new wrung,
How did she answer ? For awhile, she sat
Speechless with woe, in what deep agony

No words can tell. Then, driving back her tears,
Stifling the sob that almost rent her heart,
She pressed his infant to her breast, and said,
“ Edward, this child is thine,—and I will love it.”
Her cheek indeed was pale, but firm her step
As passing from the room she sought the nurse
And bade her see the babe was tended well.
“ Yet mind,” she said, “ be silent and discreet :
It is an orphan that I have adopted.”
And then she joined her husband, meekly striving
With gentleness to soothe his aching heart,
And make repentance purify his soul.
But oh, at night, when, wearied out with grief,
E'en the deceiver slept, she woke, and prayed
Not for herself, but him. And then the tears
That could not flow while *he* might see, gushed forth,
And so, the long night through, she prayed and wept.

The infant grew : and soon it came to know her,
And stretch its little arms, and cry, ‘ Mamma ;’
And she redeemed her word—for well she loved it.
But rumour spread strange tales : and many thought
That it was wonderful that two so young
And noble, should adopt a foundling child.
Aye, and some whispers very like the truth
Gained ground : but then to see the wedded wife
Lavish such fondness on the stranger babe
Amplly refuted them :—*It could not be :*
And so the mystery was unexplained.
The time past on ; and she most tenderly
And sweetly reared the child : and yet at times,

To her now doting husband there appeared
To be a gentle sadness in her face
It never wore before. He could not bear it.
"Helen," he cried, with sudden earnestness,
"Your heart is broken :—*I* have broken it !
You never smile as once you used to smile."
Then would she sparkling raise her eyes to his,
And play him merry airs, and laugh and sing :
But when night came, she wept.

Years past away.

The child grew up in innocence and beauty.
And Helen led its eager earnest mind
To think on all things that were true and lovely.
She was her father's darling ; yet the love
Of her she called ' Mamma ' seemed almost deeper.
Thus loving dearly, and beloved she grew,
Till love became a want of Lucy's soul.
Poor little one ! too soon she felt that want.
Upon her father strong disease had laid
Its fatal grasp. But through that weary illness
His patient wife was ever at his side,
Veiling with smiles the anguish of her heart,
Speaking to him the peace she could not feel,
She tended him with love. Upon her breast
Rested his aching head : her tender hand
Bathed the cool liquid o'er his fevered brow.
But better far than all, Helen became
The minister of grace to him, to lead
His fainting soul where living waters flow,
And make him feel he had a portion there.
To guide him where his weary burden, sin,

Might be o'erthrown, and where his bankrupt soul
Might freely buy and eat of heavenly bread,
Buy, without money, and without a price.
He died : and his last words were prayers for her,
And with his latest breath he called her blessed.
And they were left, the widow and the orphan,
To the cold world. What wealth he might, he gave
To Helen, and to Lucy after her.
But all the lands his fathers owned so long,
With their rich wealth and titles, must descend
To one who bore the Seymour's ancient name.
So Helen took her husband's orphan child,
And sought once more her happy girlhood's home.
Alas ! how changed it was. No more the voice
Of her fond father greeted her return ;
And gently soothed the sorrows of her soul ;
And met the yearnings of her heart with love.
And now her brother filled their father's place.
But he was most unworthy of his name.
For he had spent his youth and all his wealth
In reckless folly and extravagance :
And thus, in welcoming his sister home,
He hoped to live upon the widow's portion.
Poor Helen ! this last pang was spared to her ;
For with the latest sigh that Edward breathed,
The last dark shade of woe had fallen upon her ;
She had no more to suffer or to do.
The heavy sorrow that weighed down her soul,
Was more than she could bear. Age may support
The griefs that long years bring : but young hearts
break.

And Helen's heart was broken. Weep for her !
Weep, for the eager hopes of youth all crushed :
Weep, for glad love turned into bitterness :
Weep, for the blighting of a faithful heart :
But weep not that that heart found rest in death.
Yes, Helen died : poor child of sorrow ! but
A broken heart is a slow death : and they,
The dying widow and the orphan child
Had time for many most sweet communings.
And every word of truth which Helen breathed
Sunk deep in Lucy's soul. Deem it not strange :
The child was scarcely eight years old—but then
The speaker was her last, her only friend.
They were but those two, in the world alone.
And so heart spoke to heart : and love received
And treasured up the words that love inspired.
And thus it was in humble tones and low
She breathed her soul in words. “ It is gone past.—
The dreams of hope and bliss, the one fond thought
That filled my heart, and made life dear to me,
Are gone for ever. I am young in years,
But very old in sorrow. Yet I know
It was in mercy that the Lord chastised me.
He marred the idol that I would have worshipped :
And dealt the blow that broke my erring heart,
And saved my soul from death. And He had pity.
Even upon my bleeding heart he poured
The balsam of his love. He guided me
Through fearful darkness to the fount of Light.
I trusted in Him, and He was my Strength.
For oh, when youth, and earthly love were sweet,

I prayed to Jesus for His saving grace :
And in my desolation He was with me.
He is my comfort now : for in His death
I look for life. He bears my burden for me,
He leads me through this dreary wilderness
His banner o'er me, Love!" And thus it was,
Breathing such words of hope, that Helen died.
The bitterness of death was smoothed to her :
For she was Christ's, and he has Conquered Death.
What is it but a Shadow ? Jesus' death
Destroyed the substance : for He rose again !
And Death was swallowed up in Victory !

SECOND PART.

AND now indeed was Lucy desolate.
A home she had : if we may call that Home,
Where were no holy feelings of the heart
Binding in one a happy family.
Say rather, Lucy had a dwelling-place—
A shelter—not a home for the young child.
For now on Helen's brother, false Eugene,
It had devolved to be the orphan's guardian.
Lucy had wealth : for all her father left
To Helen now was hers ; secured to her
When she should be of age : and till that time
An ample yearly sum Eugene received
To rear her up in tenderness and wisdom.
And now was Lucy left to her own will.
And yet not so :—for her bright opening mind

Sought after knowledge there was none to give :
And her young heart was swelling with a love
That could not find whereon to rest itself.
Yes, Lucy will'd to learn, and long'd to love,
And both in vain.—And thus her mind was formed.
Her nature was a bright and glorious one.
She might have been, but that her lot forbad,
Something for men to gaze upon, and worship ;
A dazzling star in the bright crown of genius
That gems Britannia's brow. Her very soul
Was highest poetry ; of thought, not speech.
But it was not to be. There was no hand
To point the way, and teach the ardent child
How to make music of her own sweet thoughts.
Of all that others learn she little knew ;
But much that they know not. She could read well,
And spent whole days in reading. They were few,
And scarce adapted to a mind so young,
The books she had : all except one—the Bible.
There she read day by day : and the young child,
Taught by His power who loves a humble mind,
Grew rich in heavenly wisdom. Well she loved
That holy book. It was dead Helen's gift,
And with her first she read it : but she knew
Full well its own deep value. Thus it was,
Steeping her eager mind in purest truth,
And nourishing its growth with heavenly food,
Lucy grew up. The brightness of her life,
The perhaps too ardent feelings of her heart
Were dimmed by early sorrow : but her mind

Was firm and steadfast far beyond her years,
And its deep rooted faith grew with her growth.

And now again we reach the village scene
Where first we saw the orphan. There she stands,
Clasping her hand in Rosa's. She has seen
Eleven summers ; Rosa, some few more.
They are a lovely, and a loving pair.

Rose was the only child of doting parents ;
The child of their old age ; their cherished hope :
The fairest and the last of many dear ones.
She was their only joy,—their only sorrow.
Joy—for she was an artless gentle girl,
Loving as e'en a mother's heart could wish :
Joy—for the brightness of her sunny smile
Illumed her sire's old age, and fallen fortunes.
Sorrow—because that white transparent skin,
So beautiful, was all too delicate :
Because o'er her soft cheek the sudden flush
Would come and go too fast, whene'er she heard
A tale of sorrow or of happiness :
Because the full blue eyes too soon would change,
Now soft and melting,—bright and sparkling now :
Because she was too like her angel sisters.
This was their sorrow, but 'twas undefined,
Only a shadowy sense of future grief.
Their joy was present ; and it might have been
That the vague fear, the dread of woe to come
But made that joy more bright,—for still she lived !

And though that old man never more might see
The well loved spot where his best years were past;
Where, by his mother's knee, a child he played :
Where too he wooed and won his fair young bride,
And lovely children learnt to lisp his name :
And though his wealth was gone, his fame forgot,
And his deep learning, and his chastened worth,
Were all unprized, unknown : and though, in age
And failing strength, he earned with toil and care,
The scanty pittance which supplied their wants
Who had been reared in wealth and luxury :—
Yet found he comfort, yet had joy at heart,
For she, his last, best, dearest hope was spared.

And now the loved companion of the wise,
He who for deep research and wondrous learning
Had been so famed, so valued and esteemed ;
Was the meek master of the village school.
Full many scholars had he, and they loved him.
Yet hardly was his scanty payment earned—
They loved not learning though they loved their
teacher.

But what he long had sought he found in Lucy :
A pupil that his very heart could love.
And every hour from cheerless labour saved,
And every energy that grief had spared,
The good old Ambrose spent with fond delight
In nurturing her bright mind's early growth.
And it was beautiful to see them sit,
That old, grey-headed man, and the young child,
Together searching for the treasured store

Some master-mind bequeathed. And as the light
Of some new thought broke in upon her soul,
To see her raise her large dark eyes to his
In brightest triumph. And the old man, too,
How fondly would his glance respond to hers !
It was no trifling joy, that he had found
A clear fresh spirit that could well receive
And take such full delight in the deep truths
And lessons of best wisdom he imparted.
And Lucy—now her longings were fulfilled ;
She could both love and learn, and she was happy.
Nothing she knew of vain accomplishments :
Her mind was filled with store of highest value.
And well for her she had been rightly taught !
Else in the silent, solitary hours
The child was doomed to pass, shadows of hopes
That never could be realized, vain dreams,
And sorrowful repinings would have made
Her soul their prey, and seared her better nature.
Rose took but small delight in Lucy's studies ;
Deep thought, clear reasoning, close argument
Were wearisome to her. Better she loved
To sit and listen at her mother's knee
To some old tale of love and chivalry.
Of noble maidens fair, and warriors bold ;
Of lonely watch-tower, and of battle strife :
Of love's reward, by manly valour won.
To this she listened breathless, while the work
Fell from her hands unheeded. Her blue eyes
Were fixed intently on her mother's face :
Deeper and deeper grew the kindling flush

Upon her cheek. But when the end drew nigh ;
When the true knight had nobly won his prize,
And faith found its reward, and love was blest :—
Then would she bow her fair young head, and clasp
The knee on which she leant, and breathe in tones
Of ardent rapture—" It was beautiful !"
And oft at eve old Ambrose read aloud
The fairy visions of some poet's dream ;
And well he read, and well he loved to read :
But not so well as Rosa loved to listen.
And while she heard her heart throbbed with fresh life,
And as her fancy caught the Poet's fire
Her brow grew radiant, and her soft large eyes
Beamed with new lustre ; and the lips half parted,
Yet not a sound as of the gentlest sigh
Escaped them—till the fairy dream was o'er.
Then would she throw her snowy arms around
Her father's neck, and lay her cheek to his,
And whispering thank him for the dear delight.
And thus it was that from her earliest days
Rosa lived on in a bright waking dream
Of Poetry, and Love, and Happiness.
And she herself had framed full many a tale
Of wondrous beauty, wild, but strangely sweet.
And Ambrose saw in what her soul delighted :
He knew that visions such as poets dream
Were in his child's young spirit : then he looked
On her fair angel face, and listened to
The voice so sweetly loving,—and he said,
" I will not check her soul's imaginings.
There is no danger with a heart so pure

As hers : and Genius is the Gift of Heaven."
Yes, doting father ! and like Heaven's best gifts
To man, too often turned into a curse.
Genius ! thou far more fatal gift than beauty !
Thou spark of fire from heaven, great need thou hast
Of heavenly aid to keep thee pure and bright.
Thou spell of wondrous power over men's spirits ;
Mighty for weal or woe, for good or evil.
Thou fire that *must* burn ; either to give light,
And shine upon the darkness of men's hearts,
Gloriously bursting through the dense dull clouds,
Mists of mortality that shroud the mind,
And bringing in the pure clear light of heaven
To teach the earth-drawn spirit its high birth ;
Or else—to be the minister of evil,
Offering thy strange unhallowed fire to demons,
Searing the soul with thy fierce scorching blaze.
Or, if on others thou exert'st no power,
Then burns the hidden flame within the soul
With fearful strength and concentrated fury :
Inflames the passions, ebriates the fancy,
Maddens the heart, and sets the brain on fire.

But fire so fierce and dangerous had no place
In Rosa's gentle spirit, where the flame
Of genius scarce had struggled into life.
Nor was her nature one that strove to lead :
Rather she leant on others for support.
Or if she was a guide at all, it was
By the mute influence of her sweet life.
Not so with Lucy : Grief, and early trial,

Had given a strength and firmness to her heart,
Wondrous in one so young. And even now
She had become of all the village children
The leading spirit. To her, slighted friends
Brought their complaint, that she might knit again
With tender skill the broken cords of love.
And weeping childhood told its griefs to her.
And truant boys to her confessed their fault,
And begged her pleading grace, for well they knew
How their good Master loved to do her pleasure.
Yea, and grown maidens scorned not to seek
The counsel and advice of one so young :
“ For she was not a common child,” they said.
And oft she heard, and oft she smiled to hear
The tale of love that seemed to her so strange.
But 'mongst them all her heart still fondly clung
To her, who in her sorrow first had kissed
The tear-drop from her cheek,—the gentle Rose.
It was a beautiful love with which she loved her ;
Not as a child would love an elder sister,
Although by full three years Rose was the elder.
She thought of her as of a tender flower
Too delicate to brave the storms of life ;
And of herself as one whose duty 'twas
And pride to shield her from the world's rude blast.
And it was sweet to see how she would strive
And watch, to guard her friend from harm, and make
Her life as bright and fair as was her face.
Sweet too it was to see her dark eyes smile
In pride, because Rose was so beautiful.
And then to watch them on a summer's eve

Together wander, holding close communion ;
While Rosa's head on Lucy's shoulder rested :
And Lucy, with her tall young form so stately,
Looked like a sapling ash, round which the vine
Clings for support. And though in admiration
Of Rosa's loveliness, she had no thought
Of her own beauty,—yet was Lucy fair.
She had a broad and noble brow, from which
The rich dark hair was parted, and fell back
Clustering around her shoulders. And her eyes
Were bright and open, with a fearless glance ;
And long dark lashes like a shadowy veil
Softening their too great lustre. And the lips
So slightly curved, so finely delicate,
Now closed in pensive silence, breaking now
Into a living smile. The soft fair cheek
Tinged with a kindling flush ; the swanlike neck,
The upright graceful form, the elastic step,
Combined to make her beautiful : but more,
Far more, the noble soul that dwelt within,
And gave to every feature the impress
Of its deep thought, its pure imaginings,
Its fearless spirit, its enduring love,
Its hope, its faith, and its unfeigned devotion.
And Rose ! was she less beautiful, less pure ?
Oh no ! for never painter's highest thought
Could picture form, or face so heavenly fair.
In stature she was not so tall as Lucy :
Her step was scarce so firm and free, her form
Graceful and slight, half-droop'd, as though she were
Some tender flower that sought whereto to cling.

But then her angel brow so purely white,
The eyes so meek, so tender, and so earnest,
Soft, in their deep intensity of blue.
The lips that in their rosy rest lay sweetly
One on the other with a quiet smile.
The smooth white cheeks, o'er which a bright quick
 blush,
Play'd with a fitful beauty. The fair hair
In golden tresses flowing, waving now
About her form, and throwing its soft shade
Upon her face. The earnest, trusting glance,
Which, if it did not say, "I know no fear,"
Said yet, "I will not fear, for who would harm me?"
And showed her gentle soul, weak in itself,
Resting in the full confidence of love.
Here let me pause while yet the scene is bright.
Still would I gaze on that dear lovely child,
With her fresh unworn heart, and open brow :
Yet once more would I mark the pure delight,
The beautiful love that beams within her eyes ;
The fearless joy,—the undoubting confidence,—
The glad free smile,—but these are childhood's gifts,
And Rose grew up to womanhood and tears.

THIRD PART.

HER seventeenth year had scarcely dawned upon her,
When Rosa's mother died. Then first she knew
What sorrow meant,—then first she learnt to weep.
Then were her visions broken, and she felt
The world was not that bright and happy place
Her dreams had made it. Much and long she wept:
Until the colour left her cheek and lips,
And the large eyes grew heavy, and the form,
Always so slender, faded to a shadow.
And Ambrose saw, and trembled for his child.
And then he strove with every fond conceit
That love could prompt, or anxious care devise,
To lure her thoughts from grief. For this he nerved
His failing limbs to walk, that *she* might breathe
The pure fresh morning air. It was for this,
Though every step was fraught with weary pain,
And every breath with agony,—he climb'd
The green hill's top:—and this his dear reward,
When faint and worn he rested from his toil,
To watch health's bright returning glow o'erspread
Her too fair cheek; to see the living light
That grief had shaded and well nigh extinguished
Beam once again within his child's meek eyes.
Alas! that glow of health, it came and went,—
And those blue eyes now smiled, and now were sad.
Yes, o'er her morning hour a cloud was fallen;
The bud of such fair promise scarce had oped
Its beauty to the sunshine, when there came

Chill mists of earth to hang their gloom upon it.
Ah, in this world of sin, and death, and sorrow,
What place had one so tender. Lucy saw
What grief had been to Rosa. With the eye
Of anxious love she marked the altered looks,
The sad tones of her friend. She knew, e'en now
Disease was busy at her heart. And then
She turned from her long loved and sweet companion,
To her revered instructor and true guide,
And there she saw the cords of life were loosed.
For age, and grief, and feebleness, combined
To bring him to the grave. And though he struggled
For his child's sake, against them,—he strove vainly.
And was it to be thus indeed, ere yet
The dawn of life had ripen'd into morning?
Could such deep sorrow come to one so young?
Terrible Death! was he indeed permitted
To tear from her her best and only friends,
And make her yet the third time desolate,
Her childhood scarcely past! But Lucy's mind
Dwelt not upon her future loneliness;
There was but one great thought that filled her soul.
She gazed upon the aged, helpless father,
She looked upon his weak and drooping child:
And knew that suddenly the time was come
When she might pay them for their generous love.
Yea, by the very wisdom he had taught her,
To be to the infirm and poor old man
His stay and sole support. And by the trust
And loving confidence that Rose had in her,
Gently to lead her sad and sinking soul

To brighter thoughts, and rouse an energy
Within her listless mind. With ceaseless care
And never wearying love she tended them.
Hers was a trying task, and she had need
Of patient hope, and cheerfulness of spirit
To bear her nobly through it. Not alone
A daughter's tenderness towards failing age
She gave to Ambrose. The poor schoolmaster
Had struggled hard with life; and the last stroke
That tore from him the partner of his woes
Had roughly shaken the balance of his reason.
The strength was gone which might have nerved his
mind :

Each day his powers grew weaker and yet weaker ;
Sorrow weighed yet more heavily, and sickness,
Age, and infirmity, and poverty,
Joined with resistless force to bring him low.

Yes, low indeed. When mortal ills have power
To bind and chain the immortal spirit down.
When all the windows of the soul are darkened,
And it sleeps—deep within its clay-built prison.
It is a fearful and a terrible thought:
Is the soul dead while yet the body lives ?
Or is it in divinest love and mercy
That thus the suffering spirit has been hushed
To slumber—thus within its darkened chamber,
Insensible to pleasure and to pain,
The soul lies hid ;—unconscious of the woes
That would have made it tremble : knowing not
The scenes of desolation round its dwelling.

It weeps not for the lovely and beloved :
It mourneth not the wreck of all most dear :—
It sickeneth not with hope deferred and blighted.
The spirit sleeps :—To this earth who would wake it ?
The spirit sleeps ;—shall it wake evermore ?
Yes ! when decays its earthy habitation,
When its dark dungeon crumbles into dust ;
Then shall break in the glorious light of heaven,
And the imprisoned soul shall burst its bonds,
Wake, rise triumphantly, and soar above,
Praising His name who wrought such great salvation.

Such thoughts cheered Lucy's spirit as she gazed
Upon the old man's wan and vacant face.
While Rosa knelt before him, with hot tears
Bathing his hands, and raised her eyes to his,
With such a look of sorrow and of love.
And he with strange dull stare gazed on his child.
His eyes looked on her, but the soul saw not.
And now, with Rose, Lucy devised a plan
For his support. Her time was all her own,
For Eugene recked not how she passed her days.
Among the villagers there was not one
To fill the place Ambrose so long had held :
So Lucy gained a good old dame's consent,
And Peggy Williams called the school her own,
Where Lucy was the teacher. Rosa's place
Was ever at her helpless father's side.
She had much taste and skill in needlework :
And by it gained what might supply their wants,
And leave untouched the old man's hoarded store.

How small they were, those savings of a life!
And they had many simple friends, who now
In this their trouble proved themselves sincere :
For many a matron brought some welcome present
To the kind teacher of her wayward children;
And many a peasant, by his sage advice
Made prosperous, took freely of his fruits,
His work, the labour of his hands, and gave him.
And village maidens day by day culled flowers,
And formed them into nosegays, for they knew
How their old schoolmaster took pleasure in them.
And sturdy youths, upgrown beneath his eye,
Would gladly lend a hand in any work
About his house, or in his plot of ground,
That was beyond his gentle daughter's strength.
For the poor schoolmaster was loved by all;
E'en by his truant boys: And it might be
That some among those honest, brave young hearts
Cherished true love for his most lovely daughter.
And thus the young girls' quiet lives passed on.
Lucy was an untiring, patient teacher;
And Rosa was a sweet and gentle nurse.
And since her thought and care had been for Ambrose,
And pressing duties had compell'd her soul
To action, a new strength seem'd born in her.
As a young plant bends down before the blast
Rosa had sank in sorrow: and as when
Opposing winds come in their might, and raise
The trembling plant, and bear it up between them
Until its stem finds strength; so when deep grief
Lay heavy on her heart, cares yet more pressing

Forced the cold weight aside, and Rose raised up
Her head, and roused her soul to energy.

And thus a year passed by. Rose was eighteen,
When suddenly there came on the old man
Extreme disease. Then in his agony
He seem'd to wake to memory of things past :
And as Rose leant in sorrow o'er his couch
He called her by the names of the departed.
His wife, his eldest born, his little ones,
All, all seemed present with him, save the living.
And oft, as racking pain shot through his frame,
He pushed his waiting daughter from his side,
And wildly called on them for help who heard not.
This lasted many days, and they were forced
To take from their small treasured store, to meet
Demands unceasing: for in her close watching
Rose had no time for work. And he grew worse.
Worse, hourly worse, and death was near at hand.
Yet it might be that ere his spirit wing'd
Its flight for ever from this troubled world,
It would awake to consciousness of all
It had so deeply loved, and now must leave.
It was for this the maidens watched and prayed ;
For this, Lucy with burning tears besought
Eugene's permission to remain beside
The dying man till all indeed was o'er.
Three nights Dame Williams watched beside his bed ;
She had known sorrow, and could feel for others :
But on the fourth the sufferer calmly slept :
Slept a deep sleep that might endure for hours.

And so, with lengthened vigils deeply weary,
The dame withdrew to seek a short repose.
And long they watched :—within that darkened room
The young girls sat and trembled. Side by side
So close they were that Rosa's soft breath waved
The curl on Lucy's cheek. Yet neither dared
Whisper one word to break that fearful silence.
The yellow night-lamp threw its sickly glare
Upon their pale, sad faces. Lucy's hands
Were clasped, and her lips moved as if in prayer ;
But her fixed eyes were on her friend's last sleep.
Rose, shrinking backwards, leaned her aching head
On Lucy's shoulder: while through gathering tears
Her earnest eyes gazed on her father's face.
They were alone by that sad couch of death :
Through all that weary night they watch'd alone.
No voice spoke comfort to their bursting hearts ;
No pitying hand wiped the hot tears away.
Earth had forgotten them in that dread hour.
But had their Heavenly Father left his children ?
It was in mercy that the Lord was taking
His stricken son from trial unto glory :
And would he leave the orphans desolate ?
Would he not give one ray of hope eternal
To cheer the darkness of their deep affliction ?
He would. He did. Upon the watchers' faces
There came a gleam of sudden hope—they leaned
Forward with breathless eagerness to catch
The slightest sound or sight. The speaker moved :—
Opened his eyes.—*The soul was looking through
them.*

"Thank God," burst forth from Lucy's grateful heart.
While Rose knelt down beside her father's couch
Pressing her lips to his ; and raised his hand
And placed it on her head, and cried in tones
Of thrilling prayer, " Bless me, oh bless your child !"
The old man gazed with deep undying love
On the fair head so meekly bowed before him.
" I bless thee : God will bless thee : thou hast been
A dutiful and loving child to me."
His weak voice faltered, but his earnest eyes
Upraised to heaven, sought boundless blessings for
her.

But now those eyes are closed ; those parted lips
Are pale with deadly faintness. Lucy's breast
Supports his sinking head ; her gentle hand
Holds the reviving cordial to his lips.
And now his languid look is turn'd on *her*.
" Bless her, oh heavenly Father, bless this child."
Promise me, Lucy, never to forsake
My Rose : as tenderest sisters live together.
The Lord has given thee the stronger spirit.
Protect her : comfort her : be her support :—
So shall God bless thee." Lucy knelt, and promised.
" And now I die. It is no pain to die
But that I leave thee, Rose, lonely and weak.
I knew this time must come : but ah, I trusted
Too much in thy sweet gentleness and virtue,
And shrank from teaching thee how thou shouldst
suffer.

And now how wilt thou bear this weight of woe !
Oh I have sinned against thee. I have cherished

The sweet delusions that I knew must end
In overwhelming anguish. Yet look up.
Look up to Heaven : put your trust in God :
Pray to Him, Rose, and he will hear your prayer,
And make your weakness strength. And hear me,
dearest,

If you can pardon this my sin against you,
Hear my last prayer to you. I know your heart,
That it is form'd for love,—and you will love.
But oh, love only what is true and lovely.
Love well,—but love not to idolatry.
Do not I know the sweets of earthly love ?
And yet I tell you, Rose, there is no love
So dear as His who bought us with His blood.
Shall we not give the best we have to Him ?
Love Him, look unto Him, and be ye saved.
Receive Him in your heart, and worship Him.
So shall your earthly love become more pure,
So hand in hand with your heart's chosen friend,
Shall you walk heavenward, blessing and blest.—
And now arise, come nearer ; that my eyes
May gaze upon you ere they close for ever.
Thou child of many prayers, thou tender one,
My cherished joy, my gentlest dearest daughter :
Thee I must leave. But not alone I leave thee.
God of the Fatherless ! protect my child.
Let not affliction's blast too rudely come :
Temper the chilling winds to the shorn lamb.
I leave my darling in the world alone.
Do Thou be with her. Guide her trembling steps ;
Be her defence and shield. Oh for His sake

Who gave His life for us, deal gently with her.
Give her true faith, and fear and love of Thee ;
Teach her to do Thy will, and seek Thy face :
And oh, in thy great mercy keep her pure.
If sickness come, and loneliness, and sorrow,
And her weak heart be tempted to despair,
Then be Thou near to cheer the fainting spirit
Even as thou hast promised. If her soul
By deep despondency be driven to doubt,
And in Thy Holy Word she seek for wisdom,
Oh give to her an understanding heart.
And if temptation come to her, and guilt
Estrange her heart from Thee :—then for His sake,
Thy Son, our Saviour, if she turn again
With tears of shame and cries of penitence
Beseeching Thee for pardon for her sin—
Lord, hear her prayer, and when Thou hearest, for-
give.”

He paused. His feeble voice could form no words ;
A smile, such as the righteous wear in death,
Was on his lips. Some moments, and again
He turn'd his gaze upon his daughter's face.
His eyes grew fixed and stony : still he gazed,
But Rosa knew he saw not. His lips move,
He prays, but not a word is audible.
Till in one breaking breath, “ God bless you both : ”
One short convulsive struggle, and the soul
Has burst for ever from its prison-house.

FOURTH PART.

ROSE mourned not as she mourned for her mother.
The first burst of grief past,—and she was calm.
Not with the soothing calm of resignation ;
But the cold stillness of enduring sorrow.
She was as one in whom all hope is dead.
Rose seemed rather to endure, than live :
Her step was heavy, and her low voice sad.
All day she worked, yet grew not weary of it :
Her hands alone were active, while her heart
Brooded in solitude upon its sorrows.
And then would Lucy strive with cheerful speech
To wile her woe away. But ah, too often
She met no answer, save the upraised eyes
Of Rose, that showed the tears fast-falling from them.
Sometimes after long silence, Rose would throw
Her work aside, and tightly clasp her hands
Upon her brow, murmuring, “ Why do I live ?
I would have lived, I could have *died* for him ;
But he is gone, and all I love are gone :
Why do I live ? ” At first with soothings only
Lucy made answer to these sad repinings.
Sorrow, at least the sorrow of an orphan
Was all so new to Rose. But weeks passed on.
And still she vainly yearned for what had been :
Still her soul drank of memory's poisoned fount,
And sickened as it drank. Then gently, tenderly,
Lucy besought her to control her grief :

To bow beneath the rod, and meekly bear
The trial God had sent. She bid her rouse
Her soul from sorrow's sleep ; and earnestly
Devote herself to working active good.
Rose listened to her meekly ;—then she said,
“ Lucy, I am not strong,—and I have lost
All that I had on earth but you. It may be
I shall grow patient when my grief grows old.
Yet it seems ever new : oh, let me weep ! ”

When Ambrose died, Lucy dismissed her scholars ;
For Rosa's simple wants were all supplied
By her own earnings. All the ladies round
Employed her. She was skilful to devise
Tasteful embroidery : her slender fingers
Made beauteous flowers grow beneath their touch.
Her work was prized, her labour well rewarded.
She shared dame Williams' cottage, and her love.
Thus months past by. And Rose was uncomplaining,
But never happy. She would smile when Lucy
Spoke to her cheerfully, but her smile was sad.

It was a summer's evening : the friends
Were sitting in their vine-encircled porch,
And long had Rosa's earnest gaze been fixed
Upon the pleasing landscape : and her ear
Listened attentively to the sweet notes
Of loving birds warbling their evening hymn.
The Sun had set. But yet had not recall'd
Its fairest, purest rays. Fading, now fading,
Slowly, regrettingly, at length retiring :

And as they went each flower drooped down its head
And closed its eyes, to sleep till their return.
Rose gazed in silence on the lovely scene,
Until a soft sweet smile came o'er her face,
Tears trembled in her eyes, she threw her arms
Round Lucy, whispering, "Ah, life is sweet."

Gradually, but surely, from that time
A change was wrought in Rosa. At her work
When she was wont to bend her head and weep
Now would she smile. The varying colour grew
Brighter, yet brighter on her cheek ; her lips
Half-parted, with a smile so sweet, so strange.
Sometimes when Lucy spoke to her she started :
And sometimes sighed ere she could answer her.
Now Lucy hoped that happier times were come,
For Rose again took pleasure in her converse :
She loved to roam the fields, to gather flowers ;
She loved the song of birds ; the smiles of children,
Dearly as ever. Yet it was not peace
That filled her soul. Hers was a fitful joy,
More like the hectic brightness of a fever,
Than the pure glow of health. Often she mused :
And sometimes suddenly would clasp her hands,
And with her sparkling eyes uplift them, as
In plenitude of bliss. And Lucy pondered
What this might mean. Could it be love ? she knew
That Rose had many lovers ; and had wished
That she might find among them one whose heart
Could compensate for those whose loss she mourned.
But they, and Lucy, knew their hopes were vain.

Few ventured far where they were sure to lose.
But there was one who had from childhood loved her ;
Henry had been her father's favourite pupil.
To win her praise, the schoolboy left his sports
And gave his time to study : and the youth
Still striving that he might deserve her love,
Grew strong in wisdom, manliness, and truth.
Now by his constant industry, the man
Had earned enough to buy and stock a farm.
Through many a hard day's toil, the thought of Rose
Strengthened and cheered him. Would she slight his
love ?

The love of many years, the deep, the true.
It could not be. So Lucy thought, and yet
She could not search the depths of Rosa's heart.
Often she gazed on her sweet face, and thought
“ How more than beautiful she is. Dear Rose !
A mother's gentlest love should shield thee now.
Thou art alike in body and in mind
More fair than healthful. That I were but older !
Would that I knew how women think and feel,
That I might be to thee in thy great need
A faithful friend. How different were our fates.
I learnt so young to rest no hope on earth :
While thou didst grow from infancy to youth
In a bright dream,—more than a dream of happiness.”

It had been so. Then sorrow came, and wakened
The slumbering echoes of her heart, and thrilled
Its deepest chords. But suddenly that woe
Was turned to joy. It was not time had healed

The wounded spirit. It was joy, not peace
That shone in her blue eyes. And so long time
She lived : happy in Lucy's company,
But happier alone. And Lucy knew it.
She saw there was some secret source of bliss
She could not share. Yet they had wept together.
They had been friends in woe, and she felt sad
That Rose should wish to be alone in joy.
And very anxiously she watched her friend.
She was content to sit unnoticed by her,
And mark the brightness of her silent smile :
The strange wild flashing of her radiant eyes :
The hectic colour heightening on her cheek.
Sometimes she took the small thin hand in hers,
And felt it dry and burning. And sometimes
When Rose returned from her lone wanderings
The vivid flush was gone, the lips were pale,
And she would lean her head upon her hand
As if in very weariness and pain.
At such times Rose was never sad or fretful.
She gazed on Lucy with her old sweet smile,
And thanked her, in her winning graceful way,
For all her kind attention. And then, Lucy
Felt that their bond of love had not been broken.

One evening Rose had wandered forth alone,
And Lucy went to seek her. As she traced
The windings of the lane, the sound of voices
Fell on her ear. One of them deep and earnest
Pleading impassioned love. And she could see
Two forms among the bushes, indistinct,

But yet she knew that they were Rose and Henry.
She heard him offer her his heart, his life,—
And then she saw Rose shrink from him, and say,
“ It cannot be ; I do not love you : leave me.”
Pained at the heart, Lucy turned home again.
Had she stayed longer, she had seen how Rose,
Quickly remorseful, with clasped hands besought :
“ Forgive me, Henry, my ingratitude.
Yet I do thank you : I have nought but thanks
Wherewith to pay you for your generous love.”
“ Yet give me time to prove my love : think twice
Ere thou reject a heart that beats for thee.
Thou art alone. Friendless, and desolate !
I would so dearly cherish thee ; my hands
Should work for thee, my strength support thy weak-
ness :
My heart, with fond and never-failing love,
Seek how it might procure thee happiness.
I would I were more worthy of thee, Rose :
But I have given all I have to thee :
My love, my life, my hope of joy !” He knelt.
“ Kneel not to me ! but kneel to God : for He
Can give to you the peace I cannot give.
Yet, Henry, as a friend indeed I love you.
I cannot know what you have felt for me,
And not be grateful. As a friend I pray you
Forget how you have loved me.—I would spare
Myself and you the pain of further words :
Think of me as a friend !” He took her hand
And pressed it to his lips and to his brow :

Its fever scorched him. "Rose," he said, "forgive me,
That I have pained thee. In calamity,
In loneliness, in sorrow, think of me :
'Thou shalt not want a friend's, a *brother's* love,
While I have life. And fear not that again
I will distress thee with my hopeless passion.
Farewell ! and God be with thee." "And with thee,
My dear, my generous, noble hearted brother."
She turned away. A tear was on her cheek.
He moved not : with his hands his face he covered,
And blushed in solitude that he did weep.

From that time Lucy saw a change in Rose.
Her spirit had not lost its gladness, yet
At times a vague indefinite feeling seemed
To cloud its brightness. So the winter came.
Then Rose was ill. Her cheek grew very pale,
Save where the hectic spot of fever glowed.
And yet she shrank not from her daily work :
And yet the smile of joy was on her face.
And when she said she should be well in Spring,
Lucy believed her. Spring was late that year ;
And when it came Rose was too ill to hail it.
Then doctor's skill, and Lucy's tender care,
Could not avert the danger. Days and nights
They watched beside her couch ; and Lucy listened
And trembled as she listened to her ravings.
She spoke of things wild, beautiful, unearthly ;
She called on spirits ; talked of their bright love ;
She deemed herself a spirit, and then struggled

That she might join them. But at length this wildness
Was hushed in deadly stupor : Rosa lay
Insensible. All power of speech or sight
Was lost. This was the crisis of her fate.
All day she lie unconscious : but at night
The heavy eyelids opened, and the lips
Breathed forth some faint, low tones. Sense had
returned.

She was most deadly pale, and wholly powerless :
Oh, not the shadow of her former self !
But the devouring fever was departed.

The summer came. And very, very slowly
Rosa regained her health, but not her joy.
There was no gladness in her spirit now.
Yet still she smiled ; a smile, so sad, so solemn.
She strove to speak with cheerfulness to Lucy,
And thanked her with meek words and earnest glance
For all her care. But Lucy saw the tears
That fell in silence down her pallid cheek.
This woe was greater than the former joy :
And Lucy had no power to lessen it ;
She knew not whence it rose. But she could aid
The invalid in many household duties,
And spare her many a toil. Lucy prepared
Her simple meals ; and daily placed before her
Some delicacy such as Rosa's work
Could never have obtained. For many days
She ate of it in silence : but at length,
With a soft flush wavering upon her face,

She asked, "Whence come these dainties? You,
dear Lucy,

Could not procure them for me, and my earnings
Now scarce supply my wants!" The brilliant crimson
Mounted to Lucy's brow. She gazed on Rose
With a half-doubtful smile, and said—"a friend."
Rose trembled: raised her eyes to Lucy's face,
Then drooped their lashes on her burning cheek,
Murmuring "it is,—it is,"—her tongue refused
To sound the name that trembled on her lips.
Lucy said, "Henry." Rose bowed down her head
Between her hands and sobbed. Her whole frame
trembled.

Lucy flew to her: pressed her to her heart.

"Why do you weep so, Rose? Why should this
grieve you?"

He never sought to win you by these things:

His only hope has been to see you better.

Ah, if you ever felt the happiness

To aid a friend, deny him not such pleasure.

He is your friend: as true and faithful hearted

As ever any had. You must not slight him.

Dear Rose, I never thought you proud till now."

"I am,—I am ungrateful: I am *worse*,"

Rosa cried bitterly. "But ah, not now.

I cannot scorn him now. Go to him, Lucy;

Speak to him kindly: tell him I am well.

Say that I thank him for his goodness to me,

But that indeed I need no further aid.

Yet speak it gently, lest *he* think me proud."

“ Will you not see him, Rose ? ” “ No, no, not yet,”
She wildly cried, “ I have not strength for that.”
From that time Rose received no gift from Henry.

Thenceforth the maidens' days past calmly on.
And they had been most happy days for Lucy
Could she have seen Rose joyous as of yore.
Rose never spoke of pain, or care, or sorrow :
But Lucy saw the heavy, tearful eyes ;
The languid drooping of the nerveless limbs ;
The lips depressed. And as the summer waned
She saw that Rose grew gradually weaker.

One evening (Autumn scarcely yet had tinged
The leaves with yellow) Lucy led her friend
To enjoy the beauties of the sunset scene.
That day had been a weary one to both :
For Rose had never been so weak before,
So weak, and so desponding. Now she gazed
Through gathering tears upon the gorgeous scene.
“ Why is the earth so gay,” she wildly asked,
“ While its inhabitants are sad and sinful ?
Why are such glories spread before the eyes
Of those whose wearied souls they cannot move ?
Yet I have loved such scenes ! but now,—my heart
Is all so full that I could write,—but what ?
'Twould be but one more tale of woman's weakness
And woman's wretchedness.” “ Oh hush, Rose,
hush,
You know not what you say. It cannot be

That one so gentle, so resigned as you
Would speak thus bitterly. Ah, look around,
Look upon this fair world, glorious in beauty :
And does not all that is so lovely in it
Steal on the heart and whisper it of love ?
Some illness wears your spirits, or you pine
For more of heaven's pure air : it must be so ;
Only some weary pain could wring from you
Such bitter, bitter words." " I am rebuked ;
Lucy, the bitterness is past away.
But if you knew, oh if you could but feel
How fearfully my heart is crushed within me,
You would so pity me. But you are young ;
You know not yet, and may you never know
The craving want I feel. Pray, not to know it.
I longed, the soul within me yearned for love.
It was the one deep passion of my heart,
The hope in which I lived. It is gone past.
And now I feel my life is passing too.
Bear with me yet, for I must weep ! alas,
Would that my fault might teach thee watchfulness.
Oh folly ! I, a pilgrim upon earth,
Sought for strong ties to bind me down to it,
Oh madness ! I, yearning for perfect love
Looked for it here below where sin and death
Have their abode. Yes, Lucy, it was well
I found not what I sought. I would have made
An idol in my inmost heart to worship,
So mad and blind I was : but God forbad it,
He broke the chains I had not strength to burst,

He crushed the half-formed idol in my heart,
And sorrow teaches me that God is love.
Yes, Lucy, I can say, His will be done,
And I can praise him for His chastisement.
But sometimes, sometimes when my spirit sinks,
And old and wonted thoughts come back upon me
My stubborn heart will murmur : and indeed
I have borne much, and I am ill and weak,
I feel that I am sinking : let me lean
My head upon your bosom ; I can speak
More easily, and much it soothes my spirit
To tell you of its thoughts." And Lucy sat
Supporting in her arms Rosa's weak form.
And as she gazed in her pale earnest face
She whispered softly, " Will you tell me, Rose,
Who was it you so loved ? " " No, Lucy, no,
I never loved ; or it was but a phantom ;
A wild imagining of my own brain.
But I so longed to love :—and I believe
The inborn faith of every woman's heart
Is love, all trusting love. Thrice happy she
Who in her childhood's home finds such sweet ties
That she need never rest her hopes and fears
Upon a stranger's truth. What burning tears
Must the unloved one shed ; what swelling sighs
Must almost burst the bosom that has all
Its weight of love thrown back upon itself.
And I have known too well that deadliest woe :
The fearful meaning of those words,—in vain !
Lucy, you know how my bright childhood passed :
How I was nourished and brought up on love.

You know how my sweet mother smiled upon me,
And how, when she was gone, my father's heart
Its whole rich depths of love poured out on me.
But you could never know how I loved them.
I had no care or thought of other love
While they were spared to me. They were my world,
My life, my all,—and they, they went away.
I might not die : but ah, how could I live
And not love ! And I searched, and found not ought
In the wide world to rest my love upon.
I yearned and longed,—I was so desolate :
I had no strength, no hope : so I withdrew
Into the secret chambers of my heart,
And revelled there in vain imaginings,
Loving a phantom. That was mad delight.
The world was drear to me ; what recked I that ?
I had a brighter world in my own soul.
And there I loved :—nought that like man could
change,
Nought that could weep with woe, or bend with care,
Nought that could sink in shame, or fall through sin ;
Nought that could suffer pain, or fear, or death :
But something, with man's noblest virtues gifted ;
Bright, bright and beautiful in form and face.
In mind how perfect ! Gaze not thus upon me :
Lucy, had you such desolation known,
In body weak, hopelessly sick at heart,
And then had such bright vision come to you,
You would have welcomed, clung to it with joy,
Even as I did. Oh, but it was sweet,
That wild delusive dream of bliss that came

To cheer the woe-worn spirit : and it was
More bright, more pure, more perfect in its falseness,
Than aught of true and earthly joy we feel.
There was no doubt, no fear, no thought of change
In that, my glowing dream of happiness.
It was strange madness, but completest joy.
Yes, while it lasted. But the awakening came.
And then I knew that I had loved a phantom,
And lavished all the treasure of my heart
On a vain shadow. Bitter was that waking.
It was—no matter what : I may not tell you
What taught me first how false, how wild, how use-
less,

My love, my life had been. I prayed to die.
Unto the God from whom I had departed,
To Him whose gracious love I had despised.
I prayed for death. To go with all my sins,
With the idolatrous temple of my heart
Uncleansed, impure, into his awful presence.
I prayed in bitterness : God heard in mercy.
And I shall die ; but He has chastened me,
And humbled me, and made me know my sin.
And He has given me time and strength to pray,
Not bitterly, but from a contrite heart.
And He has given me faith, that through His love,
The free, unbounded love of Christ for us,
My soul shall live. Lucy, the end draws nigh.
I do not feel it hard to die so young :
But it is terrible to part from life,
And *know* that life was vain. Oh, God forgive me !
Forgive me that which I have left undone.

Alas ! I have no strength." Her head sank down.
Her lifeless limbs fell heavily to earth.

A wild, shrill scream broke on the still air.

The hushed birds started at that cry of anguish :

With sudden fear a horseman spurred his steed.

Again that thrilling sound : guided by it

The horseman gained the spot where Lucy knelt

In agony by Rosa's lifeless form.

"Save her," she cried, clasping her hands before
him.

Quick he dismounted. "There is life," he said,

"Lead to the nearest dwelling." Mute and trem-
bling,

Lucy led to their own : it was not far.

They laid the lifeless form upon the bed :

Rubbed the cold hands and bathed the clay-cold
brow :

They poured the wine between her lips, and held

Hot spices to her. Slowly, very slowly,

A faint slight tinge of red came on her lips :

She breathed a long-drawn sigh, her eyes unclosed ;

A shivering seized her frame : "Cold, cold," she
murmured.

The stranger held the cordial to her lips,

While Lucy strove to warm her feet and hands :

The languid pulse returned. She breathed more
freely.

With tearful eyes Lucy thanked God for it.

Then turned with outstretched hand unto the stranger,

And thanked him too, and begged him of his kind-
ness

To seek Dame Williams at a neighbour's cottage.
He took her hand and pressed it, as he said,
" Shall I not also seek your family ?
This cannot be your home." He glanced around
On the rude furniture, then on the forms
So delicately fair. " It is *her* home,"
Said Lucy, " and to-night it must be mine."
" Your parents ?" asked the stranger. " I have none."
The bright blush faded from her cheek, her eyes
Fast-filled with tears : he saw it, and departed.

FIFTH PART.

NEXT eve, as Rose and Lucy sat together,
With Lucy's arm thrown about Rosa's waist,
And Rosa's head on Lucy's shoulder resting,
Rose fell asleep. Then Lucy sat so still.
But in her silence painful thoughts oppressed her.
She pondered on her friend's unhappy fate :
So dearly cherished once, so lonely now.
And memory painted her as she had been ;
Glorious in beauty, full of love and joy.
Then that sad change : sorrow, and sin, and death.
Why was it so ? Rose was left desolate.
Lucy remembered her own loneliness :
Whence came it that she had not sinned like Rose ?
It had been joy enough for her to love her :
She was content to be the friend of Rose ;
To guard, to comfort her, to work for her,
This was her duty ; and her dear reward,

To win her love. "Ah, Rose, thou lovest me not
As I love thee? Yet how should it be so?
Thou art so lovely, and so sweetly gentle,
Who can help loving thee? Yet thou, e'en thou,
Hast pined for love, in vain." She bent her head
And gazed upon the sleeping face of Rose:
It was so calm, so pale, so passionless,
So unlike life. And now a soft low tap
Came at the door. "Come softly in, she sleeps."
The stranger entered. Lucy held her hand
To meet him, and upraised her tearful eyes
To his. "Forgive me that I do not rise," she said,
"To thank you for your kindness, but Rose sleeps
So peacefully, and she has need of rest."
And Lucy watched him as he gazed on Rose
To see if aught of hope was in his look.
Sorrow and pity dimmed his blue eyes' brightness.
And then, with gentle courtesy, he asked
Their names, and said his own was Arthur Mervyn.
He spoke to Lucy of a gentle sister
Who had been ill like Rose, and had recovered.
"And she, too, is an orphan. It will be
A happiness to her to aid your friend;
To-morrow I will bring my sister to you."
He left, Rose still asleep. Next day he came
And Alice with him. Sweet and soothing words
She spake to Rose. That visit was a short one.
Ere long she came alone. Then scarce a day
But her loved presence blessed their humble home.
Alice was older by four years than Rose.
She had a stately form, and sweet, fair face;

With eyes as blue, but not so bright as Arthur's.
The smile upon her lips was peace, not joy;
Her step was soft, not light; her glance subdued.
And day by day she came, with patient hope,
To share with Lucy in her task of love.
She strove by sympathy and tenderness
To win the sick girl's trust, and soothe her grief.
She never asked the cause of Rosa's illness.
She knew it was the sickness of the soul,
That God alone could cure, though God's own gift,
Sweet Pity, might assuage the sufferer's pain.
Her gentle voice had such persuasive power:
She calmed the fears of Rose, resolved her doubts,
And soothed her sorrows, ere they were expressed.
For sometimes unbelief and dark despair
Would prey on Rosa's soul. She could not trust
That there was pardon for such sin as hers.
Then, ere she spoke, Alice would read her thoughts,
And speak so sweetly of the love of Christ;
How He stood ever ready to receive
The trembling penitent; His pardon free,
His mercy never-failing. Then she said,
"Affliction is not sent to us in vain.
'Tis good for us when we have been in trouble.
Dear friend, believe I speak not empty words.
For what is earthly sorrow if it win
Eternity of joy! There is no trial
So perilous to the soul as bright prosperity.
When this world seems a heaven, and life is joy,
And sorrow but a name; how shall the heart
Feel its corruption? how shall fallen man

Know his mortality ? There are young spirits,
Basking in the full glory of their spring,
Who, until sorrow teach them, cannot learn
The meaning of their life. Some struggle long
Through depths of darkest gloom seeking the light.
Some learn their lesson early. All must learn it.
This world is not our rest : in duty's path
We may find happiness : i' the world, in pleasure,
None lasting. Yet when dearest hopes are dead,
When all that made our joy of life is lost,
O'er the dark waters of the troubled soul
God's Holy Spirit moves, and there is light.
Yea, if we bow in meekness 'neath the rod,
There is a heavenly balsam for our stripes,
The peace of God which passeth understanding !"
Lucy was present when these words were spoken.
Meekly she sat and listened : in her heart
She owned their truth. *Her* lesson had been learned.
And had not Alice too been taught of sorrow ?

It often happened at the eventide
As Arthur passed their gate, he drew the rein,
And stayed to ask how fared the invalid.
Sometimes he called to take his sister home.
And always when he came his words were kind :
And in his look such sweet compassion shone !
He gazed on Rosa with those glorious eyes,
So full of pity, and well-nigh of love ;
And Lucy thought, " Ah, had he sooner come,
Rose had not pined in vain." Well might he gaze
On Rosa's face : so fair, so still, so lovely ;

That patient smile : those meek and earnest eyes :
That white, transparent brow so heavenly calm.
Well might he gaze ! Well might he mourn, to see
The sweetest flower of earth so early dying.
It was too sad a sight : and it was seldom
That he could trust himself to look upon it.
So oftenest he only paused awhile
To give some kindly greeting as he passed.
And well the maidens knew his horse's footstep :
And well they knew the time when he would come.
One day the hour passed by ; and Arthur came not.
While light remained, Lucy had watched and listened.
But now the evening closed, she took her work
And sat by Rosa's couch. A softened step
Approached their window : Arthur would have
spoken,
But that he heard Rose cry, in anguished tones,
" And now I cannot work ! Oh, God of Mercy,
Grant that the end come soon." Then Lucy said,
" Dear friend, despair not. Trust thou yet in God :
Wait patiently to see the Lord's salvation.
And why wilt thou thus grieve that for awhile
Thou hast not strength to work. Have not I hands
And health to labour ? Nay, thyself hast said
That when I please my skill can equal thine.
Now must that skill be tried, until again
Those eyes shall sparkle, and the rose of health
Bloom brightly on thy cheek." And Lucy smiled,
Or tried to smile, while Rosa answered not,
Save by the teardrop in her languid eye,
That glistened there awhile, but did not fall,

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And by the lip that trembled, but spoke not.
He heard their words: and by the lamp's pale light
Could read the sad expression of their faces:
Then softly went as he had come, unnoticed.
He told his sister of the scene he witnessed.
Then Alice knew how Lucy's brave young spirit
Had struggled hard to keep her friend from want.
For long ago Alice had offered aid,
Which was refused with gentleness, but firmness.
Next day she took the richest silks to Lucy,
And said she knew no other she could trust
To broider them with taste. With grateful joy
Did Lucy promise to exert her skill.
She cull'd the fairest flowers from her garden
And wove them into wreaths, then with her needle
She wrought a lasting copy of their beauties.
Rose watched her progress with surprized delight,
And praised Lucy for her matchless skill.
"It were indeed most strange," was Lucy's answer,
If working for so dear a friend I used not
My utmost art. This work is joy to me."
'Twas quickly finished. Then she carried it
Up to the Hall, with heart and footsteps light.
And Alice with such admiration viewed it;
And praised the work so highly, and extolled
The exquisite taste that was therein displayed,
To make the rich reward with which she paid it
Seem less a gift. Tears sprang to Lucy's eyes,
As timidly she said, "'Twere joy enough
For me to work for you: but I am poor.
And I must take a price for what my hands

Would never tire to do for you for love."

Alice looked sweetly on her as she said,
"This money is not half the value to me
Your time must be to you. Yet you will force me
To take its full equivalent. Dear Lucy,
Are we not friends? Should not friends help each
other?

If you could work for me for love, allow
That I for love should aid you with my wealth."
Lucy no more refused her generous offer:
But weeping, thanked her for it. It was well :
For Rosa now required her utmost care.

The hour had come for Arthur's passing visit.
His cheerful voice was heard, but Lucy's heart
Could not respond to it. She leaned against
The casement; burning tears obscured her sight.
She told him Rose was worse. The quivering lip,
The broken voice and heaving breast, betrayed
How great the struggle to control her grief.
Little he said; but that most kind and soothing.
His words of sympathy so sweetly breathed,
Fell on her aching heart like softest balm.
And when, at parting, he besought her think
That she had other friends than her she lost,
The chain that bound her soul's emotions burst;
She sank into a seat, and unrestrained
Poured out the fulness of her grief in weeping.
With clasped hands pressed upon her brow, as if
To shut out memory,—and struggling breath,
And breast convulsed with sobbing, Lucy sat

Nor knew that Rosa called. Again! again!
Her name was softly cried, before she heard.
Then starting, with flushed face and tear-stained
cheek,

She hasten'd to her friend. Rose gazed upon her
With anxious tenderness, and said, "Dear Lucy,
Why have you stayed so long? You have been weep-
ing!

Was it for me you wept? Again the tears
Flowed o'er her cheeks, but Lucy could not answer.
Then Rosa drew her gently to her side,
And spoke low words of comfort to her softly.
She said for Lucy's sake alone she mourned
Her early death; yet faithfully she trusted
That God would raise up friends to one whose life
Had been so spent in charity to others.

"And dearest, do not mourn as though you lost
Your only friend on earth. I am your *oldest*:
The sister of your heart: But you have others."
"He said so," murmured Lucy. Rosa gazed
On the young form bowed down in woe, then turned
With eyes and hands upraised in earnest prayer,
"Lord, save her! she is *desolate*." The words
Thrilled deep in Lucy's soul. One moment, and
A bright, deep blush burned on her very brow;
The next, she threw her arms round Rosa's neck,
And kissed her cheek, and called her, "*dearest*
friend."

And now was Rosa dying. Peacefully
Her few remaining days of life past by.
She suffered little: and as death approached

Her faith and hope grew stronger. Oftentimes
She spoke to Lucy with those earnest words
The dying speak : and oftentimes she thanked her
For her fond care. But sorrow filled her heart
Whene'er she thought of Lucy's desolation.
She watched her anxiously. She saw the cheeks
That glowed when Arthur's voice was heard ap-
proaching :

She marked the sudden brightening of the eyes.
But yet, in Lucy's artless, gentle bearing,
There was such frankness and simplicity,
Such utter absence of embarrassment,
That Rosa dared not draw the veil aside
And show the heart its unsuspected secret :
And she could only humbly pray to God
That He would guard her in temptation's hour.

At this time Lucy felt her lonely fate.
The seventeenth year had nearly closed, but she
Knew not, none knew, the secret of her birth.
She deemed she was a poor and friendless orphan
Dependant on Eugene's cold charity.
And thinking of him as of Helen's brother,
It seemed not strange that he should lend her aid.
Eugene had never told her she had wealth.
And lately painful thoughts had filled her soul
Of what her future life must be : she could not
Live always thus dependant. Now she longed
To watch unceasingly by Rosa's couch.
And when Eugene refused to let her do so,
She fell upon her knees before him, weeping,

And poured forth passionate and earnest prayers,
And thanked him for his care, and bade him think
That she was not ungrateful : but the time
Was come she could not live upon his bounty.
She never would forget his kindness to her.
If it should be she ever could repay
By all a daughter's tenderness, his care,
She would return to be his nurse in sickness,
His comfort in old age. But now her duty
Called her to watch beside her dying friend :
And she *must* go. Eugene with wonder heard her ;
Then turned away in seeming sorrow, saying,
" Go ! I have reared and cherished thee till now !
I sheltered thee when thou wast weak and helpless.
Now thou art strong : or thinkest thou art ; go forth !
Leave me, as thou wert in thy childhood, friendless :
A lone old man ! I shall not miss thee long ;
Disease at least is constant." Pale and trembling,
Lucy had listened to his words in silence.
But when he turned to go,—with sudden bound
She reached his side, and with imploring voice,
And wild beseeching glance, said, " Oh recall
Those bitter words. I never will forsake thee.
I will return again and be your nurse :
My life's devotion shall repay your kindness.
But only grant that I may linger by
My friend's sad couch till death shall end her pain.
Alas, not many weeks, not many *days*,
And I shall have no friend on earth but you."
He yielded to her prayer. She blessed him for it :
Then hastened to her friend. And from that time

She never left her ; save for some few moments
While Alice watched beside her : Then would Lucy
Steal forth to taste the pure refreshing breeze.
Lucy had many sharers in her care.
Dame Williams gave her willing aid, and Alice
Came daily with a sister's tenderness
To cheer the living and support the dying.
And maidens, Rosa's schoolfellows and playmates,
Helped readily in any household work
That Lucy found no time for : and kind matrons
By turns relieved her in her lone night watches.

One day, when Alice came, Lucy was standing
Weeping by Rose, whose cheek was strangely flushed.
And as she entered, Rosa laid her hand
On Lucy's arm, and raised her eyes to hers
With meaning glance. Then Lucy hastily
Greeting their friend, went out alone. She hurried
With trembling steps through lanes, and over fields,
And paused at length before a modest porch.
An old dame answered to her gentle knock :
And twice she greeted her, ere Lucy spoke.
And then with tear-choked voice she asked for Henry.
The old dame guessed her errand well : she knew
The tale of Lucy's friendship, and had pity
On her, on Rose, and on *her son*. She spoke
Some womanly kind words to Lucy ere
She left the room. Soon Henry entered it.
Then Lucy trembled, and her colour changed
From red to white, and she could scarcely stand.
But he was calm, though sad. Then Lucy looked

Timidly, and with pity in his face,
And said, "I come from Rose, thy dying sister,
To beg a blessing from thee ere she die."
He hid his face between his hands, but spoke not.
"Forget the past," prayed Lucy. "Forget *all*,
But that the dying cannot pass in peace
Without thy blessing." He removed his hand
From the pale brow, where Lucy read the anguish
That wrung his soul. He murmured, "I *will* come.
If prayers of mine could win down blessings for her
She had indeed been blest." "This evening, then,
Ere the sun sets," urged Lucy, and departed.

Her homeward steps were slow and heavy, she
Had need of time to soothe her o'erfraught heart.
Her grief for Rose, her sympathy for Henry,
Her own deep desolation overwhelmed her.
She deemed the world a sad and dreary place,
Where hope might not abide, and love was wasted.
She almost wished that she might die with Rose.
She did not weep: only a deep-drawn sigh
At intervals burst from her troubled bosom.
At length a voice broke the sad train of thought.
She started,—Arthur Mervyn was beside her.
Gaily he spoke. But gazing in her face
He saw its look of woe, and his heart smote him
For speaking lightly to the sorrow-stricken.
Gently, in touching accents of compassion,
His deep voice musical with sweetest pity,
He whispered words of comfort. On her heart
They fell, and softened it. Her tears burst forth,

And then with words e'en kinder than before,
Soothingly Arthur laid his hand on hers.
The blood tumultuous bounded in her veins,
The throbbing pulses leapt to meet his touch.
One moment, and a strange, unknown delight
Drove sorrow from her heart: the next, tenfold
The agony returned. With wild haste, speechless,
She pressed his hand in hers, then hurried home.
She paused upon the threshold, and by force
Repressed her deep emotion, ere she entered:
But Alice read her suffering in her face.
One moment Lucy leaned o'er Rose, and whispered.
Then turned to Alice, but with eyes averted,
And prayed her to excuse her lengthened absence,
For she had had a mission to fulfil;
And thanking her for all her goodness took
Her work, and old accustomed seat, by Rosa.
The struggle was too great. The trembling hands
Refused to hold the work; the aching eyes
Saw not for tears. Alice said kindly to her,
"You are fatigued, o'er-wearied: I will sit
By Rose, while you procure some needful rest.
Lucy arose, and hurried from the room.
And then alone, within her silent chamber,
The passion of her feelings overwhelmed her.
Stretched prone upon her couch, motionless, nerve-
less,
Cold, almost breathless with her heart's oppression,
She lay. The bitter tears coursed down her cheeks:
Convulsive, struggling sobs burst from her bosom.

Then, then, she would have hailed death as a blessing.

And yet it was not grief that moved her thus.
She long had known, and been prepared to bear
The woe that soon must come. It was not joy.
Joy never thrilled with agony like hers.
It was a sudden newly-born emotion
That filled her heart to bursting, and stirred up
All other feelings into fearful tumult.
She lost all self-control : she could not think :
She had no saving power : she could but suffer.
And so she lay : till, wearied out with weeping,
Faint, spiritless, and weak, exhaustion came
Instead of peace. Then she returned again
To Rose and Alice, and the latter left them.

At the appointed time Henry arrived.
How shall my young, unpractised hand attempt
To paint that solemn scene. Most hearts have felt
The anguish of the blow when death divides
Two spirits bound by tenderest sympathies.
It is more bitter pain to part from one
Whom we have wronged : from one whose proffered
love

Our hearts have scorned or slighted : Rosa felt
She could have better borne to bid adieu
To the fond plighted lover of her youth,
Such as her dreams had been of, than to Henry.
To him, whose faithful love, and deep devotion
She had repaid with cold indifference :

To him, whose earthly hope of happiness
She made but to destroy. Bitterly weeping
She prayed for pardon and besought his blessing.
And *he* remembered only the dear love
Of his first youth, and hung in anguish o'er her.
And wept as for a young betrothed bride.
Ah, then in dying, Rosa learned how deeply,
How well she had been loved. It was too much.
The knowledge, the repentance came too late.
She sank in deadly faintness. Then in haste
Lucy commanded Henry to depart,
And send their old friend from a neighbour's house.
Yet ere she came the lingering spirit woke
Once more on earth, and speech returned to Rose.

Lucy knelt down beside her, for the words
Came low and sadly with her parting breath.
“ I have lived useless ! Lucy, let my death
Be made a warning. Go, then, *thou* wilt live,
Thou hast no cankerworm to gnaw thy heart !
Go to the thoughtless,—tell why Rosa died,
Go to the young, and tell them I was young :
Go to the lovely, for I once was fair :
Go to the bright and happy-hearted throng,
And say my spirit was as glad as theirs.
Go to the loving,—tell them how I loved :
Then go to those who yearn for love, in vain !
And speak to *them* with words that reach the soul.
Beseech them earnestly and ceaselessly,
And tell them what a dying girl tells you.
Say there is not that perfect bliss on earth

They madly long for. Bid them strive and pray,
Struggle, and overcome. Speak of that love
Eternal, and unchangeable, and perfect,
Tell them the Son of God will be their friend.
It is in mercy when the Lord denies
The sweets of earthly friendship to the soul.
The love we long for all so earnestly,
When found, would lead us to idolatry.
Bid them not waste their hours in vain regrets,
Repinings, worse than vain. Tell them to think
Less of their sorrow, far more of their Sin.
Tell them they have a duty to perform,
They have a talent to improve, a trust
To give account of unto God. Then speak
Of all their Saviour did, and felt, and suffered,
To win their love. Bid them lift up their eyes,
Their weeping eyes, and fix them on His cross.
Tell them to mourn no more for earthly love,
Such sorrow worketh death. Entreat them, turn
From this dry, barren land their panting souls,
And look to God for help, for He *will* help them.
And let them weep and say, ' Oh God, have mercy,
For we have sinned against Thee ! We repent :
We mourn our wickedness, we pray for pardon :
Behold, we come to Thee, have mercy on us,
For Thou art our Lord God.' Then will God hear
 them,
And pardon all their sins for Jesu's sake,
And send His holy Comfort to their souls.
Then trusting in Him, bent to do His will,
In active good employed, their lives shall pass.

Their trials may be bitter. Blighted hopes,
Affections crushed and slighted, love in vain.
Yet God shall never leave them : His right arm
Shall guide them through this dreary wilderness,
Till, after death, their raptured souls shall know
Fulness of love, and everlasting joy ! ”

With angel smile and meek eyes brightly raised
She paused. The lips still moved as if in prayer.
And then her lingering, tender look was fixed
On Lucy ; she in broken accents thanked her
For her true friendship during many years.
“ Thou art alone, as I was : oh, take warning
By my sad fate. And may the God of Mercy
Have pity on thee, as thou hadst on me ! ”
Those were her latest words.

An awful silence
Reigned the next hour. And then, Death took his
own.

SIXTH PART.

STILLNESS and death were there. At eventide
A mourner knelt beside a new made grave,
(Strew'd with fair flowers, fading and dying early,
As she had done who lay at rest below)
In simple mourning clad, her sad, sweet face
Looked forth from the dark mass of clustering curls
Like the pale moon, merging from clouds of night.
Lucy had come in utter desolation
To weep beside her last friend's grave. And now

The spirit that had borne and struggled bravely,
The hope that long had striven with despair,
Was crushed, was sunk, beneath that deadliest woe
To be alone i' the world. There was no heart
To share and soothe her griefs : No eye would smile
Should ever joy visit her soul again :
But she might live or die, do well or evil,
None would rejoice, none would lament for her.
As thoughts like these pressed upon Lucy's soul,
A prayer to *die* had almost passed her lips.
Then prostrate, in the deepest self-abasement,
She cried, " Oh God of Mercy, pardon me !
Have patience with me, I am sorely tried ;
Give me thy saving strength." Her hands were
clasped,

Her head bowed low, her form in meekness bent,
She dared not raise her tearful eyes to heaven,
But in her heart she prayed, struggling in prayer.
At length become more calm, she rose, and turned
Towards the gate. Then she saw Alice Mervyn,
Who took her hand and greeted her with kindness.
" Lucy, I wish to be your friend. I seek
To win your confidence. You will not think
That it is curiosity which prompts me.
I had not sought to unveil the mystery
Which shrouds your life, had that life been a glad
one.

But you seem desolate, and I would know
If friendship has no power to soothe or aid you."
Some moments Lucy paused : and then replied,
" I am an orphan. In what rank of life

My parents were, I know not. I have seen
My mother's grave. My earliest recollections
Are of a gentle lady that I loved,
And called 'Mamma : ' and of a tall, dark man,
Sad, but yet kind, her husband. While they lived
There was no happier child in all the land
Than I was. He died first : and then we left
That noble mansion that to think of now
Seems like a fairy dream. Not many months
And she too died ; and left me to Eugene,
Her brother. Then I felt I was an orphan.
For two long years I wept and pined for kindness,
In vain, till we came here. In those young days
I never thought why one so stern and cold
Should help the orphan, though I well remembered
How little kind he was to his sweet sister.
Yet now it seems most strange to me, for never
In all those years has he shown fondness for me,
Yet has he fed and clothed me, let me live
At my own will, and sought for no return.
Ah, it is bitter to be thus dependent
On one who loves me not, and whom my heart
May thank, but cannot love." Then Alice said,
"Your mind is stored with riches of deep wisdom :
Whence came such knowledge ?" Lucy answered
meekly,
"All that I have or know of good, I owe
Unto the best of friends, the kind old Ambrose.
He loved me, and with truest charity
Led my wild wandering mind in wisdom's ways.
He was a poor man, but he gave me more

Than wealth. He gave me that to which my soul
Might cling when all around was dark and cold :
He gave employment to the busy thoughts
That else had brooded murmuring o'er my fate.
You cannot feel, you cannot *guess*, the depth
Of misery which he has saved me from ;
For yours has been a bright and happy life."
She spoke with warmth : but Alice answered sadly,
" Too well I know the power of temptation ;
And how all strength but One is vain against it.
How much the heart can suffer and not break
None know but by most sad experience.
Lucy, I have a sister—who was married
To one whose earliest faith was pledged to me.
I pardoned him that wrong, for Isabel
Was worthy of all love. She parted from me
Five years ago. Since, we have never met.
It was not, Lucy, that I envied her,
But that I could not look upon her sorrow :
For he was false to her, false and cold-hearted
As he had been to me. Now he is dead,
And I must hasten to my widowed sister.
You weep for me, dear friend : we need not part :
My sister bade me seek a gentle maiden
To tend her darling, rear her opening mind :
I told her of your tenderness and truth,
And she is anxious that you should consent
To be the teacher of her little Alice."
" You are too good to me," said Lucy, weeping :
" Ah why, why cannot I accept your kindness :
But no, it must not be." " And why not, Lucy ?"

“ Because my word is plighted to Eugene.
When he permitted me to be with *her*,
I promised solemnly I would return
To be his nurse and comforter till death—
I may not break that vow : oh, do not tempt me.”

A week past by : and Alice was departed ;
And Lucy left alone with her stern guardian.
It was a weary life for the young girl :
With all her care Eugene was never pleased ;
No thankful smile repaid her kind attention.
Yet was she patient. Lucy had one pleasure :
It was her lonely walk at sunset hour ;
For then the quiet loveliness of nature
Brought balm unto her heart. She wandered, musing,
Sometimes on her own fate, often on Rosa's.
She pondered on her dying words, compared
Their import with her life, and thence drew truths
She never more forgot. She trembled, as
She searched her heart, and prayed against temptation.

One evening Lucy wandered to the spot
Where Rosa first revealed her tale of woe :
Where first she met with Arthur. There again,
For the first time since Rosa's death, she met him.
He spoke so kindly to her : even as
He gazed on her pale face and mourning robe,
His blue eyes shone through tears. He pointed to
His own dark dress, and said, “ We, too, have sorrow.”
Lucy looked on him with her lovely eyes

So full of tenderness and peace, and answered,
“ We know the mourners shall be comforted.”

From that time, how it chanced I cannot tell,
But those two often met. He seldom stopped :
But always gave a smile and passing word.
And Lucy, when she saw him from afar,
Would shrink away, unconscious why she did so,
And only thinking to escape unseen.
And yet, she could not hide it from herself,
It was the dearest pleasure of her heart
To listen to his voice, to treasure up
The music of its tones, deep in her soul.
It was great happiness to gaze unnoticed
Upon that clear, unclouded brow, and into
Those glorious eyes ; but that she seldom dared.
One day she saw him, deep in thought, advancing,
And stepped aside where some tall shrubs grew clus-
tering,
Till he should pass. He walked unheeding on ;
And by a careless movement of his hand
Struck a fair flower from his breast, that fell
Near to where Lucy stood. Awhile she watched
His form retreating, then with hasty glance
Around, stepped quickly forth, and took the blossom.
“ Poor flower ! thou art not missed, thou wert not
valued ;
Thou art unpri-
zed, neglected, like my love.
My love ! yes, I *have* loved, and loved unsought.
Yet Arthur, scorn me not. Was it so strange

That a young, lonely heart should yearn towards
Him, whose bright smile illumed its darkened lot?
Was it indeed so strange that the forlorn one
Should give deep love for pity's passing kindness?
There is no shame in loving such as he is,
The beautiful, the good. But it were shame
With this my unsought love to burden him,
And wound his generous heart with grief for one
Whose own was by his very kindness lost.
That *shall* not be. But it is such sweet pleasure
To love him, and my love seeks no return;
There is no other that my heart can rest on:
Oh, surely I may love him without sin!"

She placed the flower upon her beating bosom,
And homewards walked with hurrying steps, as if
T'escape from her own thoughts. But when, at
night
Through the long, sleepless hours her anxious soul
Was busy with itself, trying its strength,
Searching its inmost yearnings, then she shuddered.
"There is no doubt I love. There is no doubt
I am not loved. He is so far above me.
My heart with fondest ingenuity
May strive to advance his happiness, but cannot.
In nothing can he be indebted to me,
To him my love is useless,—and to me!
Ah, I have seen Rose die: I have had warning.
God will not pardon me my sin, if I
Slumber my life away in useless visions."
And then she prayed. She prayed for strength to
banish

That all absorbing feeling from her heart.
She cried, " Lord, hear me now, now that I pray
Earnestly longing for thy help, and grant
That if some sudden, strong temptation take me,
(For I am weak) and I forget to pray :—
Then for thy Mercy's sake, and for His sake,
My Saviour and my Gracious Mediator,
Remember these my prayers, and save me then."

And Lucy struggled steadfastly to keep
Her fixed resolve. But if awhile she left
Her joyless home, it happened but too often
She met with Arthur. Faithful to her purpose
She shunned his glance, and when that could not be,
She passed him with respectful courtesy.
But though she suffered not her eye to dwell
Upon his face, her heart thrilled fondly to
His wondrous melody of voice. She felt
That though her love for him was without hope,
It was her only joy on earth : that when
No more she listened to his voice, or met
His beaming smile, when from her chastened heart
All thought of him was banished ; she had parted
With all earth's happiness. Yet she shrunk not :
Earnestly, prayerfully, she struggled still.
Lucy was tried with deep adversity
As Rose had been. Desolate, poor, dependant,
Loving in vain. But she had one support,
For want of which Rose fell, firm trust in God.
In her first youth of love and joy, surrounded
With choicest blessings, Rosa's grateful heart

Had turned with gratitude to Him who gave them :
Like the glad birds sing praises to the Heaven
Whose air they breathe. Joy failed :—then hope
departed.

Rose could not wait on God for happiness,
But sought a heaven for herself on earth.
Lucy, through suffering, had early learned
To look beyond this life. She meekly rested
Her hope on God : believing steadfastly
The troubles of this transitory life
Are not to be compared with that great glory
Shall be revealed in us.

A death-bed scene
Far different from the peaceful end of Ambrose
Awaited Lucy, for Eugene was dying.
Terrible were the pangs of his remorse :
Fearful the struggle that he had with death.
Sometimes he gazed on Lucy, and it seemed
Some fearful secret trembled on his lips.
And then he turned, muttering, " I yet shall live,"
And motioned her away : then called her back
Because he could not bear to be alone.
He would not listen to the words of Lucy :
And spurned the ministers of Christ away.
Not until Death stood waiting to receive him,
Would he indeed believe that Death was near.
And then it was too late. He turned to Lucy,
Struggling for speech : Lucy believed he prayed,
And knelt beside him. But with sudden start
He raised himself : the livid lips were parted ;

The eyes strained from their sockets : every feature
Bearing its mark of mortal agony.
A scream of terror summoned the attendant.
She hastened to the room ; Eugene was dead :
And Lucy stretched insensible beside him.

Some days past by. And where the orphan dwelt
Two strangers came. The one, a grey-haired man,
Who with a father's kindness spoke to Lucy,
And said, he came to bear his charge away
From scenes that must be painful, to a home
Where happy years, he hoped, awaited her.
Then he presented to her his young daughter,
Marion Leslie, as her future friend.
The orphan humbly thanked him, but explained
That she was poor, and had no home to go to.
The stranger stood in troubled thought awhile,
Then placed a paper in her hands which shewed
That all the wealth by Edward Seymour left
To Helen, now was hers : in Eugene's hands
Placed for her use, and by his death, the trust
Devolved on Horace Leslie. Now at once
She knew all she had lost, all she had gained.
She stood in silence, neither smiled nor wept.
And Leslie, when he saw how it had been,
And that the change came suddenly on Lucy,
Left her alone with Marion. But in vain
The kind gay girl painted the brighter scenes
That opened for the orphan, or expressed
Her lively sympathy. She was not heard.

Almost unkindly Lucy turned away ;
But Marion still described her happy home,
And spoke of pleasant friends, and pure delights,
Till a slight murmur, an impatient movement,
Escaped her auditor. With a pained heart,
And injured feelings, Marion left the room.
Oh, there are sorrows in this world so deep
God only, and the heart that bears them, know
them.

We judge our brother : for a hasty word,
A fretful tone, we blame and are offended.
Can we divine what hidden wound may bleed,
Or tell how long and patiently the pain
Was borne unmurmuring ? We cannot know it.
For grief like that there is no balm on earth :
The lips must smile, the brow must be serene,
To veil the sacred sorrow from the world :
Prayer is its only refuge, prayer unceasing.
Oh then, ye happy ones ! whose truthful eyes
Beam with the very gladness of your hearts,
Be patient with the passing peevishness
Wrung from a suffering spirit.

Lucy sat

In utter loneliness. Her large dark eyes
Were fixed in deep and mournful meditation.
Upon her hand she leaned her throbbing head.
Now her lips part,—they quiver,—the large drops
Start to her eyes,—o'erflow their bounds,—they fall :
And now her lips find words. “ I leave my home,
I go : but who will sorrow for my absence ?

I come : alas, where may I look for welcome !
Thou, Arthur ! thou wilt smile, with hope and love,
And dearest friends to bless thee,—while I weep.
Oh, what is wealth while yet the heart is poor !
For riches that I value not, I go
To live, and live, and never, never see thee.
Never ! the fearful word ! oh break heart, break,
This world hath wealth for thee, but not one friend.
Never ! that endless time is now begun.
Never again his voice shall greet my ear ;
Never his frank free smile make glad my heart,
Never the glancing of his eyes meet mine.
The manly, open brow will be as clear,
The lips, whose glory falsehood never sullied,
Will smile as they alone *can* smile ; the eyes
Kindling with thoughts of high and noble purpose
Will flash with light as pure ; the thrilling voice
Will breathe its deep, rich tones,—but oh, the heart
Whose joy of life they made will linger on,
And see, and hear them, never, never more.”
She pressed her hands upon her brow in anguish.
Then started suddenly. “ Yes, *once* again,
Once, ere I part for ever, I *must* see him.
E'en now, I know the hour, he is returning.
Must he not pass the beechen grove ? ah there,
There will I hasten once again to see him,
Once more to meet his smile, to hear his voice,
And treasure them in memory for ever.”
Her hand was on the door ; her heart beat high :
A sudden impulse stayed her wandering steps :
Slowly, all trembling, she returned again ;

And kneeled, and hid her face between her hands,
And cried, " Have pity, Lord, for I am weak !"

That day, the next, the same wild wish returned.
With tears she parted from her humble friends;
But him, for whom her heart so fondly yearned,
She saw not. With her utmost power she strove
To tear from him her thoughts. That could not be.
And till the carriage bore her far away,
Her struggle was unceasing with that strong
And earnest longing that she had to see him.
And will you call this a slight sacrifice?
I can but fancy what young love may be :
But well I know it is no common grief
That can so blanch the cheek, and dim the eye :
It is no trifling struggle that has need
Of such deep, earnest prayer, such firm resolve,
And such unceasing watchfulness to keep
The tempted spirit pure.

SEVENTH PART.

It was a hall where revellers were met ;
And fairy feet kept time to measured music :
And bright eyes shone with joy, and some looked
down

With deeper happiness. And 'mongst them, one,
A dark haired maiden, fixed the wandering gaze
As on a form of wondrous loveliness.

Can this be Lucy? Can three years have wrought
So great a change? There scarcely seems a trace
Of what she was. The richly waving hair
Lies in soft bands upon her fair, calm brow.
Her long dark lashes shade the lustrous eyes,
Whose glances have a mournful tenderness
As of a grief subdued. The lovely lips
Which in their silence speak. The sweet expres-
sion,

Gentle, not joyous ; pensive, mild, refined :—
The stately, noble form,—the exquisite grace.
And those three years brought rare accomplishments
Of music, painting, poësie : she was
The heiress of great wealth,—the highly gifted ;—
The much admired beauty. Can we trace
Aught of the simple village girl in her ?
Oh yes, her greatest were her earliest charms.
There was the sacred earnestness of purpose,
The truth of heart, the purity of mind,
The depth of feeling, as in early girlhood.

She had been tempted and withstood temptation.
The struggle had been great, but she had conquered.
At first she murmured at her bitter fate,
And sank in hopeless sorrow : but ere long
A better spirit woke in her, she strove
To employ the means of good which God had given
her.

It was a noble victory she gained
When she could wean her thoughts from mournful
musings

O'er memories too dear, and fix her mind
On studies which as yet were painful to her.
Those only know *how* painful, who like her
Have had a mortal struggle with despair.
She won her dear reward. The desolate,
Whom she had solaced, cheered her desolation ;
Their grateful praise fell sweetly on the heart
That love had wounded : then the orphan felt
While there were want and sorrow to relieve
She did not live in vain. Her soul grew calm.
Behold her now amidst the festive throng.
She leans upon the arm of one, whose words
Low-breathed and earnest, seek to win a place
Within the very temple of her heart.
She stood in silence, with her face averted ;
And seemed to listen with a deep emotion
She never shewed before. Her cheeks grew pale ;
She trembled : then with sudden flush the blood
Crimsoned her face and neck. The lover marked it,
O'erjoyed. Alas, for him ! she heard him not.
Her wandering eyes had glanced upon a form

Whose image was deep graven in her heart.
For three long years she had been vainly striving
To tear it thence; ah, now she felt how vainly.
Back in one moment rolled the tide of feeling
That years of labour had been spent to stay.
“And would he know her? Had his memory
Place for the simple village girl, or was she
So altered as to seem a stranger to him?”
She could not quit the arm on which she leaned:
She dared not be alone when he approached.
Nearer he came. There was no change in him:
The manly, open brow was still unmarked
By care or sorrow. Now he was so near
That she could hear his sweet and gentle words
Breathed to another. Faint, and sick at heart,
She prayed to be conducted to her friend,
The daughter of her guardian, Marion Leslie.
Hurt by what seemed the effect his words produced,
Sir Clarence led her to a seat, and left her.
And then her spirit sank; then fearfully
From the gay dance she turned her eyes away
Lest they should gaze too earnestly on *him*.
The dance was over. He advanced towards her.
Her heart throbbed wildly as he stood beside her,
And spoke to Marion, and led *her* forth,
And Lucy turned her head aside: hot tears
Sprang to her eyes,—with anguish she restrained
 them.
Then her whole thought was but one ardent longing,
It seemed to her a strong necessity
That he should speak to her. She calmed her brow:

Her cheeks glowed bright ; her full dark eyes were
radiant

With strange excitement. She refused no longer
To join the dancers. There amidst the throng
His hand touched hers. He saw her now, but
though

An indistinct remembrance crossed his soul
Of such a face, he knew her not, but gazed
As for the first time on her noble beauty.
Their glances did not meet : her head was bent
In forced attention to unwelcome praises.
Deep blushes dyed her cheek : her modest eyes
Veiled themselves 'neath the shadow of their lashes :
And so, as Arthur looked on her, he thought
There was no loveliness like hers, and yet
It angered him that such a sweet confusion
Repaid the courtly phrases of Sir Clarence.

Due introduction past, with manly grace
At length he breathed his words of courtesy to her.
Still Arthur knew her not : when heard he ever
The orphan villager called aught but Lucy ?
Now by another name, midst other scenes
He met her, and her nobler beauty won
The heart her simple graces scarce had touched.
And now the voice whose soothing words of pity
Once woke the slumbering echoes of her heart,
Spoke in rich tones the bright and varying fancies
That strove to win those downcast eyes to smile.
And Lucy smiled :—smiled from her heart's great
gladness !

With kindling cheeks and joyous-beaming eyes.
Her bosom rose and fell with hastier swell :
Her sweet, clear voice had lost its even tone.
Ah yes, she was much changed, thus decked with
jewels,
Radiant with joy, how could he trace in her
The poorly clad, and sorrow-stricken figure,
The pallid cheeks and tear-dimmed eyes, that wrung
A sigh from his kind heart, three years before.

Thus, while he stood beside her, while his words
Thrilled on her heart, Lucy felt only happy.
But when alone, upon her sleepless bed
She searched her heart with closer scrutiny,
She found a hidden wound. Arthur might love her.
But 'twas the courted heiress that he wooed,
Not the poor maiden that loved him so well.
It was a bitter fancy. Yet her heart
Believed that his was pure, and unprofaned
By thought of wealth or gain. But ah, too surely
She knew that she had given her love to him
Unsought, unprized. She was more beauteous now;
Richer, more gifted, but not more devoted.
And yet, if now he wooed her, it was not
Because he knew her faithful, loving, patient,
As he had seen her by her dying friend,—
But that his ardent fancy had arrayed her
In its own brilliant hues,—because he dreamed not
That he had known her in a lowlier station.
And Lucy felt she could not undeceive him.
Were she to tell him of their former meetings,

Would it not show how deeply-graved, how dearly,
His image had been held? while he, perhaps,
Could scarcely trace in her her former self.
Yet, should she let him fix his love upon her
Unknowing who she was? and as a stranger
Win the affection that her own demanded?
Her upright heart forbad it. She resolved
Till he should learn how they had met before,
To be to him as to all other suitors.

And so, when next they met, her chastened looks,
And calm reserve, rebuked her ardent lover,
A pang of jealousy shot through his heart.
Arthur remembered how she blushed and trembled
At the soft words Sir Clarence breathed to her.
Sir Clarence! young, noble by rank and nature;
He was a dangerous rival, against whom
'Twas almost vain to hope: yet Arthur hoped;
For he loved ardently, with a first love.

As time past on, the rose bloomed fitfuller
On Lucy's cheek, her glances strangely varied.
And Marion Leslie partly guessed the cause:
She guessed that Lucy loved, but knew not whom.
She marked Sir Clarence with respectful warmth
Address her, and when Lucy shrank from him,
She deemed it but the bashfulness of love.
Sometimes when Lucy with unwonted coldness
Turned from him, Marion fixed her eyes upon her
With wonder and rebuke. Once Arthur saw it;
And then a momentary thought arose

Of Lucy's falsehood. Could it be, she sought
By feigned indifference to win them both,
To see them at her feet, then in her triumph
Smile at their pain? He spurned the unjust thought.
Lucy was truth itself; by look or tone
She never willingly had raised his hopes :
It might be that she had no love to give him.
But she was pure and lovely, true and gentle,
Every way worthy of his heart's devotion.
And then he thought she never could be his :
Why should he pain her with his hopeless passion ?
It were more noble to withdraw in silence
And bear his griefs alone. Yes, so he thought,
And so he purposed many times : but soon
Some quivering of the lip, some drooping eyelid,
Or tremulous tone aroused his sinking hopes.
For sometimes, when his looks or words recalled
Dear memories of the past, Lucy strove vainly
Quite to subdue her throbbing heart's emotion.
At length with thoughts conflicting worn and wearied,
Arthur believed his youth and strength were wasting
In a vain dream. Then firmly he resolved
From such delusive pleasure he would fly.
Yet once, for the last time, he would seek Lucy.

She was alone. The blush upon her cheek
Died, as he spoke his sad farewell : and yet
She breathed no word of grief for his departure.
She sat in silence : for her quivering lips
Refused to frame words of mere courtesy.

And he gazed on those drooping, trembling lashes,
And on the fluttering paleness of her cheek,
And then—the secret of his heart was told.
Yet scarcely told : for suddenly he paused :—
Because he saw her listening to his words,
Deadly pale, trembling, but without one sign
Of pleasure or approval. Then he sighed.
“ I give you pain. Forgive me ! for I go
Far from you, where my heart must dwell in darkness.

You are a beautiful and brilliant sun ;
I, a faint star, looking to you for light.”
Tears sprung to Lucy's eyes. “ You mean it not ;
But bitterly you mock me by those words.
I a bright sun ! yes, bright perchance to others,
But cold and dark within ! ” Arthur looked on her,
All selfish feelings banished, and said sadly,
“ And have I spoken of mine own regrets,
While you, the loved and envied, suffer sorrow ? ”
Lucy clasped both her hands upon her brow,
Lest he should read the struggle written there.
“ I spoke not rightly. I am quick to murmur.
I have had many gifts :—but oh, I longed
To meet a mother's love, a father's smile,
To have a friend,—a home,—a hope in life.”
She sat awhile in silence : then removed
Her hands, and turned her eyes upon him, saying,
“ I show to you the bitterness of my heart :
I am not always thus. Sometimes I feel
That God is merciful in weaning me
From too much rest on earth. He knows most
surely

How much of happiness is good for me."

Then Arthur stood before her : his dark eyes
Bent on the ground, and his cheek hotly flushing,
" I never thought that wealth or rank could move
you :

I saw what only could attract your soul.
And well I knew another's excellence,
And feared to plead my love, against his worth.
I came, only to seek one parting word,
And tell you, ere I went, how I have loved you.
I find you sad : struggling with secret sorrow.
And now, upon my bended knees I dare
To plead my long-tried, deep, enduring love.
Let me but dedicate my life to you :
Live for you, cherish you, comfort your sadness,
Seek for your joy. Reject me not, but try
If there be any heart that loves like mine.
Bid me to prove my love by any trial,
But only tell me that you do not scorn it."
The heaving bosom, the bright, varying cheek,
Betrayed her joy. But falteringly she said,
" And if there were a mystery o'er my birth,
My origin and parentage unknown,
Could you still love me ? " " For yourself, alone,
The child of prince or peasant, you I love."

She turned towards him : then as quickly shrank
From his encircling arms, and bade him listen.
" You say you love me. Since you met me first,
(The night I well remember) you have been
Faithful to me. I *must* be candid : though

My trembling breath can scarcely frame the words.
Long, long before that time my love was given :
Lightly perhaps, but not unworthily.
I loved above me, and I loved in vain."
She paused; and Arthur asked, "Does he yet live?"
"He does." "And loves another?" "I trust not."
"Those words indeed have rent my heart in twain :
You love him still : you love, and are not loved.
Can this be possible?" "I said not so.
I but regret that to your fond affection
I cannot yield a young and unworn heart."
Then Arthur turned away : for tears were bursting
Fast from his manly eyes : and when he spoke,
There was such depth of sorrow in his tones
As if his very heart was faint with grief.
"I would have given every earthly hope
To win your love, your first love : but I seek not
A widowed heart. I love,—once, and for ever.
Either my love must ask for no return,
Or meet the bliss that only can suffice it.
Ah, to have seen you happy with another,
I could have borne : but thus to leave you, hopeless,
Desolate, loving vainly, as I love"—
His utterance failed. Then Lucy turned towards
him,
And with a glance beseeching pity, said,
"Forgive me for this pain. Indeed I feared,
And still do fear to tear away the veil
That hides my trembling heart. But tell me, tell
me,
Can outward circumstances have no power

To change your love ? ” “ Nothing on earth can
change it,

Except the knowledge that you love another.”

She bent her head, and strove with both her hands

To hide her face, but through the slender fingers

Her burning blushes and fast-falling tears

Were seen. She trembled visibly. At length

With sobbing breath, and voice scarce audible,

She bade him listen to her history.

Beginning with her earliest recollections,

She told th' eventful story of her childhood :

Then spake of the old Schoolmaster, and Rose.

“ And were you then,” he cried, “ that tender friend,

The patient watcher by the dying girl ! ”

“ I was.” But hear me farther. “ Then she told
him

Of Eugene's treachery : how, at his death,

She found herself an heiress, and then left

The scene of so much joy and grief with Leslie :

And that his care procured the benefits

Her wealth was meant to purchase : that through him

She was made fitter for her novel station.

She paused. Then Arthur asked, “ And when we
met

That night, did you remember me ? ” “ I did.”

“ And then you loved another ? ” She spoke not :

But wept and trembled. Arthur knelt before her.

“ Answer me, or my struggling heart will burst.

Doom me at once to misery, I could bear

Anything rather than this dreadful doubting.

A heavenly hope bursts in upon me, tell me,

Have I presumed too greatly? Can you love me?
Or is your heart another's?" She sank down
Until her face was hidden on his breast:
And then she murmured, "Yours, and only yours:
I loved above me once, but—not another."

And then,—oh then came joy. Can words express
The feelings that are hidden from the heart?
I may not tell of Lucy's happiness,
But thou, if thou hast known such, well canst guess it.
I cannot search the mysteries of her heart,
And tell how love to every pleasure gave
A deepened thrill: but I can paint her cheeks
Blushing as though they ne'er had paled with care,
Her dark eyes glistening with a chastened bliss,
Only more sweet from suffering felt before.
And I can tell how little children stayed
And gazed with laughing gladness in her face,
For there they read of joy, and that they loved:
And how young maidens, speaking of her love,
Smiled, and rejoiced with her, and then half sighed,
With the unuttered thought,—were such bliss theirs!

FINIS.

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